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ABSTRACT

In 1979 the College of Business at the University of Montevallo (Alabama), a small undergraduate institution emphasizing liberal studies and professional programs supported by a broad base of arts and sciences, decided to work toward achieving accreditation by the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business. Curriculum review indicated that course work was lacking in international business concepts. Texts for core courses in marketing, finance, and management included chapters on international aspects, but most professors were not including the chapters in their course syllabi. Efforts were made for these chapters to be covered, but they were generally among the last chapters of the book, and it was later found that most professors were not getting to the material. A course called International Marketing was then made a required business core course in 1982. The need for faculty development was identified, to improve the faculty's confidence and enthusiasm in teaching international business. Eight staff members received 2 weeks of training in developing international courses and pedagogy. Another international course was then added, International Business, which became required in 1991. Three current developments include: (1) consideration of changing the International Business course into an International Economics course; (2) strategic planning, with continued effort in international business; and (3) consideration of a foreign language requirement. (JDD)

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Internationalization of the Business Curriculum
A Case Study - University of Montevallo

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INTERNATIONALIZING BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

In 1979 it became an official goal of the College of Business (COB) at the University of Montevallo to achieve American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation. The University of Montevallo is a state assisted university that has been designated as the Liberal Arts University for the state of Alabama. The institution has approximately 3,000 students and is located about 35 miles south of Birmingham. The mission of the University is "to provide to students from throughout the state an affordable, geographically accessible, 'small college' public higher educational experience of high quality, with a strong emphasis on undergraduate liberal studies and with professional programs supported by a broad base of arts and sciences, designed for their intellectual and personal growth in the pursuit of meaningful employment and responsible, informed citizenship." The COB accreditation goal was part of a University-wide effort to accredit every program at Montevallo where there was a Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) approved accreditation available. The effort to become accredited was a substantial challenge because there were (and are) very few undergraduate only, small schools accredited by AACSB.

A major benefit for the COB in starting the accreditation process was that it forced the faculty to review the curriculum by using a national standard. One of the problems in the curriculum was the lack of international business concepts being presented in the course work. This was in sharp contrast to AACSB expectations and, perhaps more importantly, to the curriculum of some leading business schools. The AACSB Curriculum Standard states "....to provide for a broad education preparing the student for imaginative and responsible citizenship and leadership roles in business and society - domestic and <u>worldwide</u>." After considerable discussion the faculty decided to include international material in the core courses of the COB's curriculum. The core courses are those coursed required by business majors regardless of their field of concentration. The texts for such courses, such as Principles of Marketing, Principles of Finance, and Principles of Management had international chapters contained in them, but most professors were not including those chapters in their course

syllabi. The solution to the problem of international business material coverage was for these chapters to be included in the course information being presented to the students.

One year later, the Dean decided to review the policy of integrating the international material in the core course work. After a review of the exams that were given in the classes and after an honest review by the professors, the conclusion was reached that the curriculum was not doing an adequate job of covering the material. Many times the international chapters are among the last chapters in the book, and although they were on many professors course syllabi, the fact of the matter was that most professors were not getting to the material. This was a highly unsatisfactory result.

To respond to this problem the faculty decided to resurrect an old course in the catalogue that was not being taught on a regular basis, International Marketing. The COB had a faculty member who agreed to teach the course and the faculty voted the course into the required business core. The course description reads as follows:

> Managerial and operational problems of the multinational business. Emphasis on environmental differences which influence marketing strategy.

The course became a requirement in the 1982 catalogue, although students were <u>strongly</u> encouraged to take the course even if they were not required to by their earlier catalogue. Faculty members were still encouraged to include international concepts in both their core courses and in their concentration courses. Courses that included an international component for the accreditation review were:

MK 351	Principles of Marketing
FI 372	Business Finance
EC 232	Introduction to Microeconomics
GB 308	Public Policy

In 1987, the College received AACSB accreditation, the smallest public college of business to achieve such status. Although accreditation was an important achievement, it did not end the review of the international component of the curriculum, both for AACSB purposes and because of a normal continuing review of the curriculum. It should be noted that initial accreditation is only for five years and that after the fifth year the school must write another self study and have an on-site review by an AACSB visitation team.

The Personnel Standard for AACSB accreditation states: "....The school also shall have policies and practices for managing these personnel resources to foster overall high quality in education for business administration." AACSB is encouraging faculty development in this standard. Since Montevallo is an undergraduate program only, it emphasized in its required mission statement a teaching mission. AACSB does have a research and service requirement for all of its accredited schools, but the expectations vary greatly by the mission of the school. Obviously, an undergraduate only program has substantially less research requirements than an institution that offers graduate degrees. But a school that states that its mission is a teaching mission must also prove how it is fulfilling this mission.

After the Dean of the COB was successful in raising outside funds for faculty development, he started searching for a development activity that would improve international coverage in the curriculum. The Faculty Development in International Business (FDIB) seminar at the University of South Carolina came to the Dean's attention. The University of South Carolina has been ranked as the outstanding international business school by Business Week. This program had a special appeal for several reasons. First, the program was designed to assist professors in developing international courses and majors for their colleges. Second, the FDIB courses not only had a content component in the various fields of international business, they also had a pedagogy component. Another of the major benefits of the FDIB program was the confidence it gave to faculty members in teaching the international components of their course assignments. Almost all of the faculty in the COB earned their doctorates in the early 1980's, late 1970's. None had substantial course work or experience in international business. Thus, the faculty was somewhat uncomfortable in teaching in the international area. With the experience of the FDIB behind them, the faculty gained confidence and started to teach these areas with much more enthusiasm and commitment.

A total of eight out of the fourteen teaching and professional staff members attended the two-week FDIB seminars. The following is a list of the faculty members, their field of expertise, and the FDIB seminar they chose to take.

Dr. Gene Bartolich, Assistant Professor of Management,
International Management
Dr. Dallas Blevins, Associate Professor of Finance,
International Finance
Dr. Harold Hamilton, Assistant Professor of Management,
Introduction to International Business

Dr. Roderick MacPherson, Associate Professor of Marketing, International Marketing
Dr. Kurt Mikan, Assistant Professor of Management, International Business Research
Dr. Gary Rovelstad, Assistant Professor of Accounting, International Accounting
Dr. Earl Shinn, Assistant Professor of Economics, Introduction to International Business
Dr. William Word, Dean, Introduction to International Business

After several faculty members attended an FDIB seminar they came to believe that a one course requirement in the international field was too narrow in its approach. It was decided to add another international course to the business core, International Business. This course became a requirement for students coming to Montevallo starting under the 1991 catalog. The course description is as follows: Operations and influences of international business, focusing on problems and opportunities that occur when a firm operates in more than one country.

There are three major events happening in the College of Business at this time that may have a significant affect on the international component of our student's education in the near and long-range future.

First, as part of a University-wide program review standard for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and for AACSB, the COB has started testing its seniors using the Major Field Test (MFT) in Business by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). The results of this exam show that the only area our students are deficient against national subject area norms is in economics. The faculty believes this is because the COB has only two basic courses in economics in comparison to other colleges of business that have majors in economics and sometimes require as many as three economic courses in their business core. Thus the COB is considering changing the International Business course into a International Economics course. This would give our students more exposure to economics and continue with our emphasis on international business.

Secondly, the COB has decided that it is going to start a strategic planning process this summer. The plan is to have a new mission, goal statements, and a new curriculum designed to meet the mission and goal statements. This strategic plan is the beginning of preparing ourselves for our next accreditation visit in ten years. Clearly it is expected that a major component of this plan will be a continued effort in the field of international business. AACSB has recently substantially changed its accreditation process. The accreditation standards are much more flexible than they have been in the recent past. However, the new

standards continue with an emphasis on international business education by stating that the curriculum content will provide an understanding of "....Ethical and Global Issues."

Finally, in the long run, the college is considering having a foreign language requirement as part of its program requirements. This additional requirement has several positive and negative aspects that are presently being debated in the COB. Also, the possibility of classes in international business in a European extension center are being discussed. A recent major gift to the college from a generous alumnus makes this idea a feasible project.

In conclusion, the present program of incorporating international business education in the COB curriculum has been an evolutionary one. The faculty has learned from its past experiences, both positive and negative, and is strongly committed to retaining a vital international component in the future. The COB is proud of the international education segment of its curriculum; its international strategy has been an important factor in helping to achieve AACSB accreditation.